

Assignment 1. Word Count: 1863

All translations from Cicero's Latin are my own.

I. Translation on *Against Verres* 2.1.62

But, I'm sure, in these affairs alone he used to have untamed and unbridled desires: the rest of his desires were held in check by another rationale or method. How many free-born [people] do you think that [bad man] has violated, how many mothers of families do you think that [bad man has violated] in that foul and vile legateship? Is there any town in which he has stepped foot where he has not left behind more marks of his atrocities and scandals than marks of his arrival? But I will omit all [things] which are most certain and most clear; I will choose just one of the wicked deeds of that [bad man], so that from here I am able to arrive more easily at Sicily, which has placed this burden[some] business [on] me.

II. Translation on *Against Verres* 2.1.63

On the Hellespont, there is a town [called] Lampsacus, O judges, among the first of the provinces of Asia, famous and noble; however, the citizens themselves of Lampsacus are not only the most dutiful to all Roman citizens, but also, in addition, are especially calm and quiet, almost beyond all the rest of the Greeks inclined to the highest leisure, rather than to any strife or [civil] disorder. It happened, when that [bad man] had prevailed on Gnaeus Dolabella to send him to King Nicomedes and King Sadalas, and when he had begged this expedition from him [?] that was more suited to his own gain rather than to the interest of the republic, that on that journey he came to Lampsacus bringing great misfortune and near destruction of the city-state. That [bad man] was led to a certain host, Janitor, and his companions were likewise stationed at

the houses of other hosts. As was the custom of that [bad man], and as his shameful lusts were always urging him to do, immediately, he gave a task to those companions of his, the most worthless and infamous of men, that they might inquire and find out if there might be any virgin or woman worthy of his staying longer at Lampsacus for her sake [? on account of which thing ?]

III. Commentary on *Against Verres* 2.1.63

Throughout this passage, Cicero repeatedly refers to Verres using the demonstrative pronoun *iste*. While literally denoting "that man," in forensic rhetoric *iste* carries a dismissive and contemptuous force.¹ Rather than granting Verres the dignity of a proper name, Cicero relies on *iste* to mark him as a morally degraded figure already familiar to the court, making condemnation seem self-evident before the details of the narrative even unfold.²

This moral corruption is framed against the legitimate mechanics of Roman governance. When detailing Verres's request for his diplomatic mission, Cicero uses the form *depoposcisset*, the pluperfect subjunctive of *deposco*.³ The verb contains the reduplicated perfect stem *poposc-*, providing a reminder that reduplication remained part of Latin's inherited morphological system, even if it was not a productive feature of Latin verb formation in the manner of other Indo-European languages.⁴ Grammatically, Cicero layers his account with subjunctives in indirect discourse and clauses of characterization to create distance between objective fact and interpretive judgment. Indicatives are reserved for straightforward narrative facts, whereas subjunctives appear when explaining motives and intentions—such as Verres's concern for public business being undermined by the claim that the journey was sought *magis ad quaestum suum*

¹ Cic. *Verr.* 2.1.62–63.

² Cic. *Verr.* 2.1.63.

³ Cic. *Verr.* 2.1.63.

⁴ Cser, András. "The History of Perfective Reduplication and Stem-Initial Patterns in Latin." *Acta Antiqua Academiae Scientiarum Hungaricae* 49, no. 2 (2009): 107–115. <https://doi.org/10.1556/AAnt.49.2009.2.1>

*quam ad rei publicae tempus adcommodatum.*⁵ The grammar itself reflects the distinction between historical reality and Cicero's rhetorical characterization.

Cicero's characterization of Verres' entry into Lampsacus is unusually vivid and rhetorically charged: *ut illo itinere veniret Lampsacum cum magna calamitate et prope pernicie civitatis* ("that on that journey he arrived at Lampsacus with great calamity and near ruin to the state").⁶ Verres is cast not as a Roman magistrate on a routine diplomatic transit, but as a catastrophic force of destruction visiting the city. This heightened language functions as tragic foreshadowing, alerting the jury that disaster attends Verres wherever he sets foot while the unsuspecting Lampsacenes remain ignorant. Syntactically, the genitive *civitatis* modifies both *calamitate* and *pernicie apo koinou*.⁷ By withholding *civitatis* until the end of the clause, Cicero delivers a shocking climax: the victim of Verres's arrival is not just an individual or a single household, but the entire citizen community.

The paired nouns *calamitas* and *perniciēs* magnify the consequences of Verres's presence, framing his unchecked appetites as a moral plague that inflicts sweeping disaster upon an innocent civic body. A useful thematic parallel can be drawn with Horace's *Odes* 3.6, where civic devastation (*Hesperiae mala luctuosae*) is connected to moral degeneration, neglect of sacred bounds, and arrogance (*dis te minorem quod geris*).⁸ Cicero employs a striking precursor to this Horatian sensibility: Verres' unchecked, impiety-driven appetites are framed as a moral plague that inflicts sweeping, quasi-divine *calamitas* and *perniciēs* upon an innocent civic body, elevating an act of administrative extortion to the level of a tragic, nation-altering catastrophe. While a direct literary relationship should not be assumed, comparing Cicero's rhetoric with

⁵ Cic. *Verr.* 2.1.63.

⁶ Cic. *Verr.* 2.1.63.

⁷ Cic. *Verr.* 2.1.63.

⁸ Hor. *Carm.* 3.6.

Horace's helps situate this narrative within a broader Roman discourse that connects private moral corruption to public civic ruin.

To heighten this tragedy, Cicero constructs a sharp contrast between the character of Lampsacus and the conduct of Verres. The city is introduced as *clarum et nobile*, while its inhabitants are *summe...officiosi, maxime sedati et quieti*, and inclined toward *otium* rather than violence.⁹ This description is striking because the jury already knows that the episode will culminate in a riot against Roman representatives. Cicero therefore reframes the event before narrating it, encouraging the jury to view the Lampsacenes not as naturally rebellious Greeks but as a peaceful community driven to desperation by Verres' behavior. The accumulation of superlatives emphasizes their exemplary character and heightens the moral contrast with the Roman officials who enter the city.

This dramatic tension takes on elements of theatrical irony as the narrative moves to lodging. Verres is hosted by a man named Janitor—a name suspiciously convenient given that *ianitor* literally translates to "doorkeeper." Ingo Gildenhard noted that Cicero exploits the comic potential of this name, perhaps reshaping or highlighting it to make the scene resemble a stage comedy where innocent hospitality opens the door to catastrophe.¹⁰ The scene begins to resemble a stage comedy in which seemingly innocent hospitality opens the door to catastrophe. Furthermore, the deponent verb *commoraretur* subtly reinforces Verres's corrupt priorities. Ostensibly, his agents search for a woman for whose sake he might remain (*commoraretur*) in Lampsacus longer; the verb suggests a lingering presence, humorously masking predatory intentions as a legitimate administrative delay.¹¹

⁹ Cic. *Verr.* 2.1.63.

¹⁰ Gildenhard, Ingo. *Cicero, Against Verres, 2.1.53–86: Latin Text with Introduction, Study Questions, Commentary and English Translation*, 105, and 107–108.

¹¹ Cic. *Verr.* 2.1.63.

The central violation of the episode rests on the perversion of *hospitium* (hospitality), a sacred social institution designed to foster trust and legal protection between Romans and provincials. Cicero underscores the quartering of Verres and his retinue using vivid historic presents: *deducitur iste... comitesque... conlocantur* ("that man is escorted... and his companions are placed").¹² This sudden grammatical shift injects dramatic urgency into the sequence. Later in section 64, Cicero emphasizes these lodging verbs (*conlocantur, deversari, deduci*) when Verres complains that Rubrius is staying *parum laute deversari* ("insufficiently luxuriously") and orders him transferred to the house of Philodamus (*ad Philodamum deduci iubet*).¹³ Instead of upholding *hospitium*, Verres perverts it into an instrument of systemic exploitation, turning a private relationship into a vehicle for public outrage, sexual tyranny, and international scandal.

Cicero framing this abuse as habitual is central to his legal strategy, marked by the deliberate phrase *ut mos erat istius* ("as was his custom"). In Roman culture, *mos*—most famously embodied in *mos maiorum*—signified the unwritten moral backbone governing honorable conduct and civic virtue.¹⁴ By applying this venerable term to Verres's predatory habits, Cicero ironically transforms *mos* into a measure of settled depravity, establishing that his misconduct was a systemic character trait rather than an isolated lapse. This phrasing carries lethal consequences when viewed through Roman legal theory.

In the *Partitiones Oratoriae*, Cicero defines equity (*aequitas*) as stemming from natural law and tradition (*aut gentium iure aut maiorum more*), stressing that defending Roman customs and laws (*nostros mores legesque tueamur*) is a duty prescribed by natural law.¹⁵ Cicero notes that offenses committed deliberately—rather than through ignorance, necessity, or chance

¹² Cic. *Verr.* 2.1.63.

¹³ Cic. *Verr.* 2.1.63–64.

¹⁴ Ennius, *Annales*, fragment 156 (Skutsch), quoted in Augustine, *De civitate Dei* 2.21.

¹⁵ Cic. *Part. or.* 130–131.

(*imprudenter aut necessitate aut casu*)—cannot claim the leniency of equity.¹⁶ By characterizing Verres' predatory habits explicitly as his *mos*, Cicero strategically strips Verres of any legal defense of accident or momentary poor judgment. If Verres' crimes are committed *by habit and custom* (*ut mos erat istius*), they represent a deliberate, voluntary choice (*sua sponte et voluntate*).¹⁷ Cicero thus constructs a double indictment: Verres not only subverts the foundational *mos* that natural law commands every Roman official to uphold, but he establishes a personal *mos* of corruption that places him entirely outside the bounds of judicial clemency.

The scope of Verres's targets further escalates the indictment. His attendants are ordered to scout the city for any *virgo* (unmarried maiden) or *mulier digna* (woman of recognized status), building on Cicero's earlier mention of threats to *ingenui* and *matres familias*.¹⁸ The choice of *ingenui* ("free-born persons") establishes a foundational civic claim, as Roman jurisprudence strictly defined *ingenuitas* as protected free-born legal status, separating citizens from freedpersons (*libertini*) and enslaved persons (*servi*).¹⁹ By progressing from *ingenui* to *matres familias*, *virgines*, and *mulieres dignae*, Cicero traces a calculated escalation that elevates private sexual misconduct into a grave political offense against civic order.

This theme of status inversion is further developed through Cicero's description of Rubrius as Verres's *delicias suas* in section 64. The expression presents Rubrius as a favored object of personal attachment, evoking the language of domestic indulgence. In Roman domestic life, terms like *deliciae* or *pueri delicati* were applied to household favorites or enslaved children who were subjected to domestic exploitation and sexual availability.²⁰ By applying *delicias suas*

¹⁶ Cic. *Part. or.* 130–131.

¹⁷ Cic. *Verr.* 2.1.63.

¹⁸ Cic. *Verr.* 2.1.62–63.

¹⁹ Gaius, *Institutes*, 1.11.

²⁰ Cic. *Verr.* 2.1.64; Christian Laes, "Desperately Different? *Delicia*-Children in the Roman Household," in *Early Christian Families in Context: An Interdisciplinary Dialogue*, ed. David L. Balch and Carolyn Osiek (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2003), 298–326.

to Rubrius—a free-born Roman citizen serving on an official legation—Cicero performs a devastating status inversion. He rhetorically strips a Roman official of his *ingenuitas*, degrading him to the level of an exploited domestic pet.²¹ Verres is thus shown violating the status of allied *ingenui* and *matres familias* on the outside, while simultaneously reducing his own Roman inner circle to *deliciae* on the inside.

Ultimately, Cicero transforms private crime into public concern by relying on the sacred status of the Roman household (*domus*). As Cicero articulates in *De Domo Sua* 109, the domestic sphere represents the ultimate sanctuary of civic and religious life: "*Quid est sanctius, quid omni religione munitius quam domus unius cuiusque civium? Hic arae sunt, hic foci, hic di penates, hic sacra, religiones, caerimoniae continentur; hoc perfugium est ita sanctum omnibus ut inde abripi neminem fas sit.*"²² Although *De Domo Sua* arises from a different political context, Cicero's representation of the household as an inviolable religious refuge offers a compelling framework for interpreting the domestic intrusions in *In Verrem*. By invading private dwellings to search out women, Verres desecrates the fundamental religious sanctuary of the citizenry.²³ Consequently, private outrage becomes a legitimate subject for a public prosecution. By bringing Verres' predatory intrusion into the *quaestio* (extortion court), Cicero elevates what might otherwise be dismissed as isolated, domestic corruption into a matter of grave public interest, systemic tyranny, and Roman civic dishonor.

²¹ Cic. *Verr.* 2.1.64.

²² Cic. *Dom.* 109.

²³ Cic. *Verr.* 2.1.63.

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